



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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### **More farmers part of the 2006 Agricultural Census than previously**

More farmers will take part in the 2006 Agricultural Census, to be launched later this month, than ever before says the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Around 160,000 genuine farm businesses are expected to be confirmed to be operating as at the 30 June 2006 as a result of its five-yearly agricultural census. This is a significant increase on currently available estimates of farm numbers which put the number at about 130,000.

This increase is the result of the ABS using the Australian Business Register as the population frame used to identify farm businesses which has identified a significant number of mainly smaller businesses which have previously slipped through the net.

According to Gemma Van Halderen, head of the ABS's Agriculture Program, greater coverage by the Agricultural Census is vital to understanding the progress and future prospects of all agricultural industries and their products, as well as their farm practices.

"Better representation of businesses involved in agriculture will provide a huge improvement in the usefulness of agricultural census statistics to industry groups and government policy makers," Gemma said.

"Industries consisting of many smaller farms, such as horticulture and beef cattle stand to benefit most from this increase in coverage," she said.

The 2006 Agricultural Census is being officially launched on 19 June in Canberra with a key note speech by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Sussan Ley MP, who is the Member for Farrer in the Australian Parliament and a beef and wool producer.

The Agricultural Census is a once in five year opportunity for farmers to contribute to information about their sector. All businesses which produce agricultural commodities, including meat, grain, vegetables, flowers, and even honey, are included in the census.

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